

weekly accumulations (though this practice may have its use, in keeping a man observant of himself), but at certain considerable intervals, as at the end of each year, or any other measure of time that is ample enough for some definable alteration to have taken place in the character or attainments.

It is needless to say that the *style* should be as simple as possible—unless indeed the writer accounts the theme worthy of being bedecked with brilliants and flowers. If he idolize his own image so much as to think it deserves to be enshrined in a frame or cabinet of gold, why, let him enshrine it.

Should it be asked what degree of explicitness ought to prevail through this review, in reference to those particulars on which conscience has fixed the most condemning mark; I answer, that if a man writes it exclusively for his own use, he ought to signify the quality and measure of the delinquency, so far explicitly, as to secure to his mind a defined recollection of the verdict pronounced by conscience before its emotions were quelled by time; and so far as, in default of an adequate sentence *then*, to constrain him to pronounce it *now*. Such honest distinctness is necessary, because this will be the most useful part of his record for reflection to dwell upon; because this is the part which self-love is most willing to diminish and memory to dismiss; because mere general terms or allusions of censure will but little aid the cultivation of his humility; and because this license of saying so much about himself in the character of a biographer may become only a temptation to the indulgence of vanity, and a protection from the shame of it, unless he can maintain the feeling in earnest, that it is really at a confessional, a severe one, that he is giving his account.

But perhaps he wishes to hold this record open to an intimate relation or friend; perhaps even thinks it might supply some interest and some lessons to his children. And what then? Why then it is perhaps too probable that though he could readily confess some of his faults, there may have been certain states of his mind, and certain circumstances in his conduct, which he cannot persuade himself to present to such inspection. Such a difficulty of being quite ingenuous, when it is actually guilt, and not